

I also want to extend my congratulations to the University of Wisconsin Badgers on their impressive season. Wisconsin finished their season with a school record 23 wins. Their 17 home wins were also the most in program history.

Winning the NIT title for the first time proved the Cowgirls have arrived as a force on the national scene, and I know all the fans of the university will continue to be proud of this team for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 384, congratulating the University of Wyoming's women's basketball team for winning the 2007 NCAA Division I Woman's National Invitational Tournament Championship.

On March 31, 2007, the University of Wyoming Cowgirls basketball team defeated the University of Wisconsin by a score of 72-56 to capture the NIT title and conclude their most successful season in school history.

Led by junior Hanna Zaveckz, the tournament MVP, and junior Jodi Bolerjack, who scored 16 points in the championship game, the Cowgirls of Wyoming truly had a remarkable season in which they compiled a record of 27-9, finishing second in the Mountain West Conference.

The tournament title capped what ended up being the most successful season ever for the Cowgirls basketball team in school history. No Wyoming Cowgirls team had won as many games. The previous record was set by the 1978-79 team, which finished at 25-7, and no team ever advanced so far in postseason play.

As the State's sole 4-year educational institution, the University of Wyoming receives strong support from the State and its residents, making it the perfect place for a great learning environment. The university was recently ranked by the Princeton Review as one of the Nation's best colleges for 2006, and the College of Business Department of Economics and Finance was also ranked 10th in the Nation and 12th in the world for its program in resource and environmental economics.

I extend my congratulations to head coach Joe Legerski, athletic director Tom Berman, president Tom Buchanan, all of the hard-working players, the fans and to the University of Wyoming.

I'm happy to join my good friend and colleague Representative CUBIN in honoring this exceptional team and all the accomplishments, and wish all involved continued success.

I join with my colleague from the Education and Labor Committee, Mr. SARBANES, in support of this resolution.064

I have no further speakers and would yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure, and I yield back my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I might also ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Joint Resolution 44, as amended, that was previously discussed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 384.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 561) recognizing the 20th anniversary of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the impact it has made on homelessness and endeavoring to continue working to eliminate homelessness in the United States.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 561

Whereas July 22, 2007, is the 20th anniversary of the enactment of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, which was renamed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act in October 2000;

Whereas Representatives Stewart B. McKinney and Bruce Vento worked tirelessly in the Congress to develop a Federal response to homelessness;

Whereas Representative Stewart B. McKinney was committed to exposing the depth of the growing problem of homelessness in the 1980s;

Whereas Representative Stewart B. McKinney was a recognized expert on Federal housing law and urban affairs who successfully amended the National Housing Act and the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to better target Federal aid to smaller cities, but became terminally ill with pneumonia after sleeping on a grate outside a Federal building with the homeless of Washington, DC;

Whereas in 1985, after personally viewing the circumstances of the homeless and the need for crisis intervention in his congressional district in St. Paul, Minnesota, Representative Bruce Vento introduced a resolution to express the sense of the Congress that homelessness is a national problem requiring a national solution;

Whereas throughout his career, Representative Vento remained dedicated to securing a commitment of Federal resources to address homelessness;

Whereas the programs established by the McKinney-Vento Act have provided housing, education, health care, and job training as-

sistance, and critical outreach, to thousands of homeless men, women, and children in the United States;

Whereas the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program of the McKinney-Vento Act has resulted in a significant increase in the number of homeless children and youth attending school on a regular basis;

Whereas the McKinney-Vento Act was intended to be only an emergency response and not the sole Federal response to homelessness;

Whereas over the course of a year, as many as 3,500,000 persons are estimated to experience homelessness in the United States;

Whereas approximately 400,000 veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States experience homelessness at some point over the course of a year;

Whereas the homeless population includes vulnerable groups such as children, unaccompanied youth, and persons with disabilities; and

Whereas there were at least 142 unprovoked assaults against homeless persons in 2006, including 20 that resulted in death: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the 20th anniversary of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the impact it has made on homelessness in the United States;

(2) recognizes the positive impact the McKinney-Vento Act has had on hundreds of thousands of homeless men, women, children, and youth in the United States;

(3) recognizes the substantial contributions of Representatives Stewart B. McKinney and Bruce Vento in addressing homelessness;

(4) recognizes that homelessness continues to be an urgent problem in the United States;

(5) commends the dedication and commitment of service providers, including faith-based and nonprofit organizations, who are working to end homelessness in their communities and provide emergency food, shelter, and services to homeless Americans;

(6) recognizes that the lack of affordable housing exacerbates homelessness in the United States;

(7) supports the continued efforts of Federal, State, and local governments and private non-profit organizations in their efforts to prevent and end homelessness through the development of affordable housing;

(8) recognizes that the life expectancy of a homeless person in the United States is 30 years shorter than that of the average American and supports efforts to improve the health of homeless Americans;

(9) supports efforts to prevent and end homelessness among veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States;

(10) supports efforts to ensure accurate and timely processing of applications for disability benefits as a means of decreasing homelessness among disabled persons;

(11) recognizes that the safety and well-being of homeless persons is an urgent problem;

(12) recognizes the critical role of education and public schools in preventing and ending homelessness, and supports efforts to improve stability, services, and access to school for homeless children and youth; and

(13) endeavors to work with the same courage, dignity, and determination exemplified by Representatives McKinney and Vento to eliminate homelessness in the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important resolution. It is an appropriate noting of the anniversary, 20-year anniversary, of the passage of the Homeless Assistance Act. It marked the beginning of a formal Federal recognition of the problem of homelessness; it's a great paradox, and one of which we should be embarrassed in this country.

It may not seem obvious to people, but before this, certainly 25 years ago and beyond, the homeless population was an invisible one. And it was in the 1980s that people began to focus on it.

Two former Members of this body, both of whom sadly died younger than should have been the case, while still in their fullness of powers as Members of this body were among the first to recognize it, and it was bipartisan. The former Member from Connecticut, Stewart McKinney, whose successor will be speaking on behalf of this very shortly, was one of those who began it. And he was joined in his advocacy by the late Bruce Vento from St. Paul. And they were two men of great compassion and vision. They were skilled legislators who served on the committee as it was then called on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs, and they insisted that we, as a body, in this very wealthy Nation, address the terrible tragedy of people who were homeless, including children and war veterans.

A number of things contributed to the homelessness issue. There were some trends in this society, and often we hear about unintended consequences. There were some trends that in themselves were welcomed that had these negative consequences. One was the improvement in urban areas, the transformation of many downtowns in our big cities from places that were considered not very attractive places in which to live to places that people wanted to live in, the phenomenon known as gentrification.

The area that I represented when I was in the State legislature in the 1970s in Boston, in downtown Boston there were boarding houses, rooming houses in many of the downtown parts of Boston. Most of those are now much more expensive housing. They are single-family homes or condominiums. That, from the standpoint of the city, I suppose, is an improvement. But many of those who lived there were priced out of the market and, in many cases, found no alternative housing.

We also had the movement of deinstitutionalization, of deciding that people with various problems, emotional and mental problems, that it was better to try to get them integrated into communities than to have them living forever apart in institutions, and on the whole that was a very positive step. But no major social policy happens perfectly. The combination of the upgrading economically of these downtowns, of the release of people from in-

stitutions, these contributed to the homeless problem.

□ 1400

There are, of course, other problems. Vietnam veterans who came back from a war that they didn't ask to start, who were sent by this country to this difficult country and came back to a country that treated them poorly, that did not honor their commitment and the sacrifice of their time and of their health. And in combination with substance abuse, all of these came together.

At any rate, 20 years ago we recognized that we had this problem, and we have begun to deal with it. And this resolution is a tribute to the two farsighted men who led this fight; to the many, many people who have worked to try to provide a solution to homelessness; to the homeless themselves, fellow citizens of all ages and races and backgrounds who have had to cope with these difficulties, some because of their own failings, often because of no thing that they did wrong but because of circumstances in which they found themselves. In any case, we ought to deal with it.

And this resolution is also very thoughtful, and I call attention to the "whereases." Whereases, to be candid, Mr. Speaker, are often unemployment. They are filler. But in this case the whereases make some very important points, and one in particular I want to address. It talks about the vulnerable groups that are included. Another one talks about the veterans who are involved. That is, this makes clear that we are dealing with people who have a very legitimate claim on our response. In addition, the resolution itself goes beyond really congratulating people for the work they did and deploring the continued existence of homelessness, but it makes some very specific policy recommendations, which, Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Financial Services will be responding to and has already begun to respond to.

For example, in the resolution, clause 6 says that we recognize "that the lack of affordable housing exacerbates homelessness in the United States." That may seem to state the obvious, but the obvious may have been stated but hasn't been acted on. We have not done nearly enough to produce affordable housing. Homelessness requires shelter; it requires services. But it requires, more than anything else, homes for people. Affordable housing, also rental housing, but it requires housing.

The resolution supports the continued efforts of Federal, State, and local governments in their efforts to prevent and end homelessness through the development of affordable housing. It was not an accident that the gentleman from Connecticut who succeeded Mr. McKinney will be soon speaking on this, is a member of our committee, and is a cosponsor with many of us on legislation that will actually return

the Federal Government to the job of producing affordable housing.

So I welcome this resolution for what it commemorates but also for what it commits this Congress to do.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H. Res. 561, a resolution recognizing the 20th anniversary of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Our resolution, which I introduced along with Chairwoman MAXINE WATERS and Representative BETTY McCOLLUM, acknowledges the 20th anniversary of the act, which was yesterday, July 22, and recognizes the impact Congressmen McKinney and Vento and their legislation named after them have had on homelessness.

Before reflecting on Stewart McKinney's life and the impact of his work on millions of lives across the country, I would like to express my gratitude to Chairwoman WATERS and particularly Chairman BARNEY FRANK, as well as Ranking Members SPENCER BACHUS and JUDY BIGGERT, for moving this resolution to the floor. I also appreciate the work of the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and the 15 other organizations that have endorsed the recognition of this anniversary.

I serve in the seat previously represented by Stewart McKinney. Stewart served as the ranking member on the House Banking Subcommittee on Housing, as well as the Committee on the District of Columbia. It was in this capacity that he became especially concerned about homelessness, particularly in our capital city.

He loved urban areas, and like our colleague Bruce Vento, he recognized homelessness is a national problem that requires a national solution. Stewart's commitment to exposing the depth of the growing problem of homelessness in the 1980s led him to contract pneumonia after sleeping on a grate outside a Federal building with D.C. area homeless.

Shortly after his death on May 7, 1987, his family, friends, and staff gathered to discuss how to continue his philosophy of caring for those who are the least able to care for themselves. They created the Stewart B. McKinney Foundation, an organization whose mission is to provide funds to care for persons with HIV who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Today, Lucie McKinney continues the work Stewart began in his memory and keeps his spirit alive in this precious foundation.

Stewart was beloved by his colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Reading the tributes that were offered to Stewart on the House floor on the day of his death, a rather thick book, I might add, I was struck by his colleagues' appreciation for his humanity, his warm spirit, bipartisanship, and dedication to good work. I particularly want to make reference to one colleague, former Representative Bill

Frenzel, who said, "I remember I often asked how he could stand it for over 16 years being on the House Banking Committee, and he said, 'You do not understand. It is the Housing Subcommittee that keeps me here because it is the most important thing I am doing in Congress.'"

Let me conclude by saying the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, now known as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, was first enacted in 1987 as the first major coordinated Federal response to homelessness. Passed in response to the rapid and dramatic growth of homelessness in the United States during the 1980s, the McKinney Act emphasized emergency measures, transitional measures, and long-term solutions to combat the homeless crisis.

Despite the impact of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, homelessness continues to be a pervasive problem in America. It is important Congress support a comprehensive range of programs beyond emergency food, shelter, and health care services for the homeless.

We must promote the development of affordable housing, provide supportive services to those who are homeless or in vulnerable housing situations, acknowledge and study the high rates of homelessness among our Nation's veterans, and recognize the critical role our schools play in preventing and ending homelessness among children.

On the anniversary of the McKinney-Vento Act, I want to express our sincere gratitude for the dedication and commitment of service providers who are working to end homelessness in our communities and provide emergency food, shelter, and services.

In Connecticut's Fourth Congressional District, I want to commend the work of Homes for the Brave, Bridgeport; Operation Hope, Fairfield; Shelter for the Homeless, Stamford; Norwalk Emergency Shelter; Interfaith Housing Association of Westport and Weston; Families in Transition, Bridgeport; St. Luke's Lifeworks, Stamford; Prospect House, Bridgeport; and all the other organizations working to assist the homeless or those who are at risk of becoming homeless.

With the passage of this resolution, I hope my colleagues and I will endeavor to work with the same courage, dignity, and determination exemplified by Representatives McKinney and Vento to eliminate homelessness in the United States.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the ranking member of the Housing Subcommittee from Illinois.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 561, recognizing the 20th anniversary of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Since 1987, McKinney-Vento has served as the foundation of a cohesive national strategy against homeless-

ness. In addition to housing, McKinney-Vento includes vital programs that address the nutritional, health care, and educational needs of the less fortunate.

As a member of the Education and Labor Committee, I have spent a great deal of time examining the unique obstacles that exist for runaway, homeless, and other disconnected youth, and I have seen first-hand the devastating impact that lost educational opportunities can have on the lives of homeless youth. Unfortunately, for many of these children, school is the only source of stability in their lives.

That is why in 2001 I introduced the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, a bill that ensures homeless children have access to immediate enrollment without the barriers and red tape that had too often kept them out of school. My view was, and remains, that being without a home should not mean being without an education. I am pleased to report that Congress agreed and we were able to get this bill incorporated into the No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law in 2002.

Following the tragic hurricanes of Katrina and Rita, the Education for Homeless Children and Youth programs in NCLB were put to the test and proved crucial to providing much-needed stability and vital services to those in need. Because programs like McKinney-Vento were already in place, the Federal Government was better prepared to meet the educational and social needs of displaced children during a time of national crisis.

Perhaps most importantly, this anniversary is an opportunity to call attention to the work that still remains to be done, work like tearing down barriers that prevent unaccompanied homeless youth from attending school.

In this spirit, I would like to invite my colleagues to join me in supporting a vital piece of legislation that will do just that, H.R. 601, the FAFSA Fix for Homeless Kids Act. This important bill, which was introduced along with my good friend from Texas, Congressman HINOJOSA, will ensure that the doors of higher education remain open for some of our Nation's most vulnerable youth. At no additional cost to taxpayers, this bill simply ensures that unaccompanied homeless youth are not required to submit a parent's financial information to qualify for Federal student aid. While these requirements are logical for most applicants, they create insurmountable barriers for unaccompanied homeless youth who cannot supply these records.

As a member of the Financial Services and Education and Labor Committees, I look forward to working with my colleagues on other important policy initiatives like reauthorizing the McKinney-Vento programs under HUD and NCLB. As we move forward on these items in the coming months, we must join together to ensure that addressing the needs of America's homeless remains a top priority.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my good friend and distinguished colleague from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) for introducing this resolution and for his dedication to improving the lives of homeless Americans. I would also like to thank Mr. FRANK and Mr. BACHUS for cosponsoring this resolution and helping to move it through the Financial Services Committee in such a timely and bipartisan way.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this resolution and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman FRANK. He made sure the bill got to the floor quickly, and I thank him for all of his good work on homeless issues as well as housing.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I again note that this is not simply words. Words are important and the work of Bruce Vento and Stewart McKinney, two outstanding Members of Congress, ought to be recognized. The fact that we are talking here about veterans, about children, about other populations that we all want very much to help, they are important. But I want to stress again this is also a commitment for the Committee on Financial Services. I know I speak for the chairwoman of the Housing Subcommittee, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), and my colleague here.

And I want to again point to clauses 6 and 7 of the resolution. The resolution "recognizes that the lack of affordable housing exacerbates homelessness in the United States," and No. 7, "supports the continued efforts of Federal, State, and local governments and private nonprofit organizations in their efforts to prevent and end homelessness through the development of affordable housing."

The services that are provided, the shelter, the counseling, they are all absolutely essential. But so is a commitment by this very wealthy Nation to help build affordable housing. And if we were not to make that commitment, then the resolution would, I think, be an empty one.

So I look forward to the Committee on Financial Services working together in a bipartisan way to continue to bring to this floor, and I hope ultimately to the desk of the President, and, more important, ultimately to the streets of our cities and rural areas in this country the housing that is needed. This is a promise that we are going to go forward with building affordable housing, and it is a promise that we fully intend to keep.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 561, recognizing the 20th anniversary of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. I was pleased to join my Housing Subcommittee colleague Mr. SHAYS, and Congresswoman MCCOLLUM, in introducing this resolution to honor their late predecessors—Stewart McKinney of Connecticut and Bruce Vento of Minnesota—for their work across party lines to create the McKinney-Vento programs in response to the widespread homelessness that had reoccurred in the early 1980's for the first time since the Great Depression.

Since then, the McKinney-Vento Act programs have helped thousands of homeless men, women, and children return to stable housing and lives in which they can reach their full potential. I am pleased that we will take up for consideration today a FY 2008 appropriations bill for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which administers the majority of McKinney-Vento grants, that provides for \$1.561 billion for the HUD homeless assistance account, a \$234 million increase over FY 2006.

But as national homeless organizations noted poignantly at an event a few of us attended last week, this is truly a "bittersweet" anniversary. While this groundbreaking homeless legislation is a highlight of the legacy I inherit as the Chair of the Housing Subcommittee, the sad fact is that the McKinney-Vento Act programs should not still be so desperately needed on their 20th birthday.

In fact, because the McKinney-Vento Act was debated a few years before I entered Congress—though I had certainly addressed homeless issues during my tenure in the California state legislature—I had my staff provide me with some of the legislative history surrounding the bill. A couple of points are worth noting.

First, nobody ever thought that the McKinney-Vento Act was the answer to homelessness, despite its ambitious creation of 15 separate programs and authorization of over \$400 million in funding. Indeed, the original House bill was entitled the "Urgent Relief for the Homeless Act." Of it, my distinguished predecessor as Chair of the then-Housing and Community Development Subcommittee, the late Henry Gonzalez, said, "The emergency assistance provided in this bill will not eradicate the causes of homelessness; but rather is an emergency short-term effort to assist homeless persons."

In other words, the McKinney-Vento programs were always meant as a first step—a first step toward a social safety net in which no person is forced to live on the streets or in shelters because of poverty, whether or not that poverty is coupled with additional challenges like mental illness, drug addiction or HIV/AIDS.

What is also striking, however, is how much the people involved then knew or suspected, even in the midst of a new crisis, about the real long-term solutions to homelessness. Of necessity, perhaps, given the rapid and overwhelming growth in homelessness at the time, the majority of early McKinney-Vento Act authorizations and appropriations funded emergency food and shelter assistance. Yet, from

the start, the McKinney-Vento Act invested in a wide range of interventions—including permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, education, mental health and substance addiction services, job training, and other interventions.

Building on this basic infrastructure, academic research coupled with the hard-earned knowledge of practitioners and government have moved us to a place where we know much more about who the homeless are, and what it takes to end homelessness for them than we did in 1987.

I am proud that the McKinney-Vento Act itself grew out of Housing Subcommittee hearings then-Chairman Gonzales convened starting 25 years ago, and, after Congress returns from its August recess, I intend to hold a series of four in-depth Subcommittee hearings to examine lessons learned in the intervening period in order to formulate better federal housing policy, starting with an updated McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

But reauthorizing the McKinney-Vento Act, no matter how perfectly, is only a small piece of a real federal agenda to end homelessness. Another glaring theme emerges from the 1987 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—the increasing lack of affordable housing and the Federal government's progressive disinvestment in housing production programs.

Well, the situation has only gotten worse. As you know, the 800,000 people who experience homelessness on any given night—over 10 percent of them in my home city of Los Angeles—are only the most visible feature of an affordable housing crisis that has reached epic proportions across the country.

As Housing Subcommittee Chair, my response is simple. It's time to get the Federal government back in the affordable housing production business. I am hoping we start with enactment of H.R. 1851, The Section 8 Voucher Improvement Act and H.R. 2895, the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Simply put, if the Federal government does not re-engage on affordable housing at this scale, and more, our successors will face the prospect of introducing a resolution to mark the 40th anniversary of the McKinney-Vento Act in 2027. Let us hope we can render such a sad event unnecessary.

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Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 561.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMENDING DAVID RAY RITCHESON AND RECOGNIZING HIS EFFORTS IN PROMOTING FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO COMBAT HATE CRIMES

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules

and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 535) commending David Ray Ritcheson, a survivor of one of the most horrific hate crimes in the history of Texas, and recognizing his efforts in promoting Federal legislation to combat hate crimes.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 535

Whereas David Ray Ritcheson, a Mexican-American, was a friendly and cheerful student at Klein Collins High School in the Houston suburb of Spring, Texas, and a popular and talented football athlete who was loved and admired by his family and friends;

Whereas on April 23, 2006, at the age of 16, David Ray Ritcheson was severely assaulted while attending a party in Spring, Texas;

Whereas the former running back and freshman homecoming prince spent more than three months in the hospital as a result of the injuries he suffered in the assault and endured more than 30 surgeries to restore his appearance and regain the normal use of his bodily functions;

Whereas no human being deserves to be tortured and victimized like David Ray Ritcheson simply because he is of a different background, race, religion, ethnic group, or sexual orientation;

Whereas of all crimes, hate crimes are most likely to create or exacerbate tensions that can trigger larger community-wide racial conflict, civil disturbances, and riots in communities at-risk of serious social and economic consequences;

Whereas hate-motivated violence disrupts the tranquility and safety of communities, impedes the movement of members of targeted groups, and prevents members of targeted groups from purchasing goods and services, obtaining or sustaining employment, and fulfilling the American Dream;

Whereas the courageous, eloquent, and compelling testimony of David Ray Ritcheson before a committee of the House of Representatives brought into vivid relief the human face of victims of hate crimes and the terrible suffering that such crimes inflict on victims and their families, friends, and communities;

Whereas David Ray Ritcheson, in his testimony, emphasized that he was a survivor who urged the Federal Government to take the lead in deterring individuals like those who attacked him from committing violent crimes against others because of where they are from, the color of their skin, the God they worship, the person they love, or the way they look, talk, or act;

Whereas David Ray Ritcheson's powerful testimony helped inspire the House of Representatives to pass the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007 (H.R. 1592 of the 110th Congress), which incorporates key provisions of the David Ray Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007 (H.R. 254 of the 110th Congress);

Whereas David Ray Ritcheson vowed to do whatever he could to help make the United States a hate-free place in which to live;

Whereas the courage displayed by David Ray Ritcheson is an inspiration to all Americans and reinforces the message that acts of bigotry and hate are unacceptable in the United States; and

Whereas, on July 1, 2007, David Ray Ritcheson died at the age of 18: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives mourns the passing of David Ray Ritcheson and commends him for his activism in contributing and raising awareness